

The Mysterious Grave

Eliphalet Price

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among the first to enter in this region, and had his choice. He selected mostly timbered land, and got it as nearly in a body as might be. The lands so entered in this county are in Washington and Indiana townships. These one hundred and seventy-five quarter-sections made a very considerable monopoly, and retarded the settlement of the country very much. After the entries were made, Joseph Fowler died; and Samuel Fowler deeded the land to his heirs, of whom there are many. We believe there has been some dispute connected with transfers of these lands, on account of an apparent or supposed dower interest of Mrs. Fowler in them. The timber lands have been robbed considerably by settlers around them, who found no opportunity for purchasing. The greater portion of the Fowler land in this county has now been sold to settlers."

Since the above account was published, we have been informed that the object of Joseph Fowler in entering this large tract was purely, or in part, benevolent. Having a large number of poor relations living in Maryland, he conceived and adopted this plan to secure them homes in the west, where they might have a chance to better their circumstances. At the time of his death he was on his way, by sea, to gather them up to transfer them to their new homes.

THE MYSTERIOUS GRAVE.

BY ELIPHALET PRICE.

There is a high, bald, mountainous promontory, situated immediately at the junction of the Volga and Turkey rivers, whose summit is crowned with a solitary grave, which, at an earlier period of time was visited annually by a venerable Indian of the Sauk nation, who, after carefully removing the

vegetation that grew upon its surface, and, depositing his presents to the dead, would quietly depart for his tribe, far away towards the waters of the Missouri.

It was in the summer of 1835, that, in one of my hunting rambles, I was decoyed to the summit of this hill by an animal which, at a distance, had the appearance of a bear, but, upon gaining the height, the game had disappeared.

As I stood gazing upon the wild, romantic scenery that stretched far away beneath my feet, reposing in solitude, and wrapt in the gorgeous mantle of verdant nature, I was started by the barking of a dog. Turning in the direction of the noise, I discovered an Indian a short distance from me, sitting in a stooping posture, removing the grass and vegetation from one of those little mounds or hillocks that usually cover the remains of the sepulchered red man. I approached near to him and stood leaning upon my rifle, contemplating the various ceremonial rites that reverence, and the superstitions of nations have prompted over the mouldering remains of the dead, as a demonstration of their love, affection, and regard for the departed friend. And I said to myself, "in this respect, Indian, you are worthy to be ranked with the more enlightened Roman, Athenian, or Egyptian." He seemed not to observe me, but busied himself in digging up with his knife the grass that grew upon the surface of the mound, throwing it aside, and beating the ground with a small paddle, seemingly, in order to give it a hard, smooth, and even surface. His long white locks, that hung promiscuously around his visage, as he bent forward in the performance of his solemn task, almost hid from my view the time-worn furrows on his withered cheek; but as they waned in the wind, I could occasionally discover a tear sparkling along the dusky channels, starting, then pouring, and starting again, as though reluctant to quit that fount which had become almost extinguished by the drouth of time. At length, being satisfied that he had performed his annual service to the dead, he arose to his feet, and, placing his hand over his eyes as a shade, he viewed the solar orb for a mo-

ment, seemingly to ascertain how far it had progressed in its diurnal revolution; then, adjusting his blanket robe about his person, he tottered away, bending under the weighty burden of time. He had gone but a few yards, when, observing that his dog was asleep, he turned back, and called loudly but mildly to him; for he, too, like his master, was old, and had lost his hearing. "Come, Shun-ga-rah, come," said he, "there is danger here; the camp-fires of our enemies are blazing away upon the graves of my people" — evidently referring to the Winnebagoes, — who had just commenced crossing the Mississippi, to poach upon the newly-acquired lands of the government. The dog aroused at the summons of his master, when I observed, "Indian, who is it that sleeps beneath this mound, that has awakened in your breast these rites of hospitality?"

He paused for a moment, his eyes intently upon the ground, apparently giving attention to my remark; then, starting from his reverie, he advanced towards me, while a smile of mingled joy and sorrow seemed to diffuse itself over the wavy furrows in his wrinkled cheek, as he proceeded to excavate the earth at the eastern extremity of the mound. In a few minutes he brought forth a scroll of aspen bark, the ends of which were enclosed with a beautifully embroidered skin of the martin, from which dangled a braid of beads, tasseled with the tusks of the panther. Removing the embroidered skin at one end, he drew forth a plain, brown, German flute, and desired me to play on it. I received the instrument, while my curiosity was excited to the highest degree, to know for what purpose he had deposited it there, and to whom it had originally belonged. While brooding over the melancholy reflections that it awakened, I placed the instrument to my mouth, and, in my humble way, blew one of the beautiful airs of Erin, then paused to listen to its echoing sound, as it leaped from crag to crag, and hushed its softer murmurs in the far-receding distance. My attention was now arrested by the Indian, who was rolling upon the ground, singing, crying, and laughing alternately, and beating the earth with his hand, and repeating the words, "Your brother, my brother."

At length, composing himself, I sat down by him upon the grass, when he related the following story : —

“Very many years,” said he, “when I was a very young man, our warriors went into the Sioux country and returned with many scalps. A great feast was ordered, and I, with many others, was dispatched to kill game for the occasion. I had been unsuccessful the first day, and was returning to my wigwam, following the windings of yonder stream, that takes its course along that forest-covered valley (pointing to what is now known as Elk creek), when I heard a splashing in the water. Creeping carefully to the bank of the stream, I was surprised at beholding a white man, sitting upon a stone washing the blood from his face and arms. I had seen but one white man before, which was more than many of my people had seen. He soon discovered me, and beckoned that I should come to him. I approached him cautiously at first, when, by signs, he gave me to understand that he had been wounded by a bear, and could not walk. He was a young man, about my age, and I carried him upon my back to our village, which was situated just yonder (pointing to the prairie now occupied by the farm of Col.^v Wayman). Our chiefs welcomed him, and our medicine men soon healed his wounds, while he became a great favorite with all our people. We were friends and companions—I taught him to hunt and fish—but he was melancholy and sick at heart, and would often wander away by himself, and remain all day sitting upon some elevated piece of ground, blowing upon his flute the tune you blew, or singing and crying. Often at night, when our people were hushed in sleep, he would steal away from my wigwam and clamber to the top of this hill, and break the stillness of the night with the voice of his flute. The wolves would howl from the neighboring hills, and the shrill scream of the treacherous panther would start the slumbering Indian from his bear-skin. At length, our prophet said it would bring evil upon our people, and our chiefs forbid him going again. He grew more sad and melancholy after this, and our medicine-men said that he would die. Gradually, he sick-

ened, and refused to eat. I watched by him many nights, for I had found him, and called him my brother. When he could no longer speak, he marked upon a piece of bark that, which means something in your language, and gave it to me, together with this flute. He died, and I buried him here. I have shown the bark to many white men since—they would look at it, laugh, and give it to me back again. I could not learn what it said; so, when I grew old, and the white man had bought our lands, I buried it here with his flute.”

“Where is the bark?” said I, eagerly; “let me see it.”

He drew from the scroll a small piece of birch-bark, upon which had been written, evidently with a lead pencil, though much obliterated by handling, the following words: “Erin, an exile bequeaths thee his blessing!”

I translated it into the language of the old Indian, when a smile of satisfaction beamed upon his countenance as he shook me by the hand, and he arose to depart, taking with him the scroll and its contents.

“Come, Shun-ga-rah, come,” said he, “you have seen many moons—Shun-ga-rah, you will never come again, but I will come once more.”

Many years have elapsed since then, but the old man has never returned. The rains have nearly levelled the little mound, while the trembling aspen and the wild-briar grow luxuriantly over the Mysterious Grave.

HISTORY OF LOUISA COUNTY.

BY WILLIAM L. TOOLE.

The readers of the following continued sketches, or history of Louisa county, are requested to read the former article relating thereto,* to keep up the connection, and therein find what may appear in this an omission or imperfectness in his-

*Sketches and Incidents relating to the settlement of Louisa County, page 45, Vol. VI., January, 1868.

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